"JOY IN SORROW."

REMARKS

AT THE

FUNERAL OF

Mrs. SUSAN ANNA GANTT,

BY

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REMARKS.

"What am I?" said Luther, as he witnessed the patience of one in extreme suffering. "What am I, but a wordy Preacher, compared with this great Doer?" And—to compare small things with great—your preacher has often been constrained to echo these words, as he has stood by the chair of anguish in which this uncomplaining martyr met the will of God. It is an easy thing, comparatively, to preach the Gospel—with all the nameless trials of that office—it is an easy thing, too, to *live* the Gospel, by expending life's *active* energies in the service—but to exemplify the spirit of Christ by weeks, months, and even years of sore, augmenting, but unmurmuring affliction! This it is which tasks the spirit and tries the faith! This it is which shames all proof else of the power of the Gospel, and all estimation else of its preciousness.

The skeptic may steel his heart against the most earnest appeals of the sacred desk, cheating himself with the delusion that they are insincere; he may, turn away from the mirror of God's Word, straight-

way forgetting "what manner of person he is," in determined doubt of the reality of the picture. He may see, unconvinced, the evidence of a life of holy Christian activity, for even *he* can understand that such a life has its present rewards—that Godliness has the promise of "the life that now is." But how can he resist the appeal that testifies its sincerity by groans "which cannot be uttered?" How can he refuse to believe a Word which writes the evidence of its truthfulness, with hard, but loving hand, upon a quivering human frame? How can *he* call that "a refined selfishness" which meekly surrenders every pleasing thing, and calmly accepts suffering as its unrelieved lot until the end, supported by, and even joyful in, that which the end promises to bestow? The hour of suffering, like that which terminates it in death, is an "honest hour," and the declaration which it seals, may be seldom questioned.

And those who are chosen to preach the Gospel thus, from the altar of sacrifice, rather than the throne of speech, are the favored ministers of God's Word, and not the forsaken. "Whom He loveth, He

chasteneth." Even the philosopher *Seneca*, could say: "as the faithful teacher gives his most hopeful scholars the hardest lessons, so does God deal with His creatures! The brave soldier does not murmur that his Captain selects him for the post of danger and most arduous duty; he does not say "my commander has put indignity upon me!" Oh no! His happy exclamation is, "He has honored me, and I will try to deserve his favor!"

As the ministry of suffering is the most effective, so are its ministers most approved and rewarded:

"What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they!"

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them,

and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

We may well solace ourselves with such thoughts—such *truths*—as these, as we meditate upon the path of suffering which has ended here. Could we see only that weary way itself, and not as it is mapped out upon the plan of the Heavenly country, we should feel, indeed, that "clouds and darkness are round about the throne," and these, so deep and dread that in them all thought of hope and cheer, in such an hour, would be obscured. What could *He* be, who, for His own pleasure, could thus smite, scourge and slay, rending many hearts in crushing one? But when we can see that path, compassed with clouds indeed, and deepening to the darkness of the tomb; when we see that path brightening to the "perfect day" beyond, having no trace of the clouds of earth, but the pearly drops which they have left upon the brow of the weary walker therein, to glow in the crown of the skies; when we can see the darkness therein disappearing before its way, and the soul itself set as a star on high, to shine

with the brightness of the firmament forever and ever, then, then—we can bless the gate of suffering, through which this soul has passed to God.

We have no need to speak here in praise of the departed. Simple justice to her character might seem exaggeration to those who knew her not, whilst to those who knew her well, it would be superfluous to remind them how noble and true a woman, how devoted a wife, how tender, gentle and loving a mother, and how good a mistress, has passed from among them. If we shall speak in praise of her christian character, it is only because thus we speak to the praise of God. It was the faith of the Gospel, in which alone she boasted. It was Grace which moulded natural endowments of unusual richness into the symmetry and proportion which all have admired. It was Grace which made her a centre of social love and reverence, and the object of a filial affection that was little less than absolute devotion. It was Grace, which led her to weary never in praying, pleading; winning and warning by counsel and example, until every one of the children whom God

had given her, were given back again to Him, by their own covenant engagement to be His. It was Grace which enabled her to "glorify God in the fires" of a living and protracted martyrdom, and which, we are assured to-night, has woven for her brow the crown of life.

She loved the cause of Christ! No subject was ever so dear to her as the prosperity of His Church. She loved the people of God, and sought opportunity, even when suffering from ceaseless bodily agony, to show that love. Always thoughtless of herself, and always thoughtful of others, when the interests of Zion were concerned, she seemed to realize truly that she "was not her own." Her religion was as broad as charity itself. As her suffering presence was the frequent resort of ministers of other denominations than her own—to which she was strongly attached—so were their ministrations always welcome and profitable. But, unless their experience was different from that of one who was sometimes there, they went "not to minister, but to be ministered unto;" not to *teach*, but to *learn*, from one whom God was teach-

ing, in a school whose lessons were graven upon the heart with a pen of iron; they went to learn how a living soul could illustrate the mysterious injunction: "Be still, and know that I am God!"

We need not say that her end was peace. Calmly and thoughtfully, though fettered in the chair which had been her prison for two long years, racked with pain which grew to intensity almost beyond the power of others to witness, she "set her house in order," gave her parting counsels to children and grand-children in turn, and to her weeping servants, and then waited for the messenger. But He delayed His coming. The cup might not yet pass from her, though it seemed full to overflowing. Days and nights yet of exquisite pain were only broken by brief intervals of sleep, but through them all, her Hope was anchored firm within the vail. With a voice broken, and scarcely audible, she repeated hymns and promises of Scripture, and strove to sing with those who sang for her, longing always to "depart and be with Christ, which was far better."

At length, on Tuesday morning, August 23d, she fell into a calm slumber, and she is sleeping still!

——"O blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep!"

But the eternal waking had not yet come. The spirit lingered still in that slumbering but crumbling earthly tabernacle; lingered through another hushed and quiet day and night, as if waiting until an only brother could arrive, and receive a faint sign of recognition, and then, without a groan or sigh, whilst all her children were about her, at "midnight there was a cry made, 'Behold the Bride-groom cometh,' and she entered in with Him to the Feast to go no more out forever!"

"We watched her breathing thro' the night,
Her breathing, soft and low;
As in her breast the wave of life,
Kept heaving to and fro.

And when the morn came, dim and sad,
And chill with dewy showers
Her weary eyes had closed—she had
Another morn than ours!"

We need not speak of her here, where she has so long and sweetly spoken, but

we do need to ask what message she has for us. "Being dead, she yet speaketh," and is not the lesson one enforced upon us, as lesson rarely was before? It says that the religion of the Gospel it is which can beautify this life, and glorify its end; support under trials at which nature shudders, and even give songs in the night of profoundest sorrow; hush the sigh of agony in the inevitable hour when Death severs the tenderest ties of nature, and make the tomb itself welcome to those who enter, and even to those who weep around it. It tells *us*, who share the Faith which has been here so signally illustrated, how little even we have known of its incomparable excellence for this life; and, oh! it tells those who profess it not, how nakedly they stand exposed to the blasts of life, and how helplessly they must meet the issues of eternity! Shall not these voiceless lips wake us from the slumber of unconcern, and this lifeless form be the means of new life to us!

Take up the bier, ye upon whom devolves that sacred duty, and bear her from the

sight of the world, the place appointed for all the dying—to the grave—the place appointed for all the living! But as ye go, tread lightly, for you bear a temple of the Holy Ghost! One upon which the Father Himself has put peculiar honor, purifying it by fire! And ye who follow the dead, return to follow her counsels and example to the life which she has reached! And ye who remain, let not the remembrance of what has passed for so long a time before your very eyes, beneath this roof, ever fade from your remembrance, until we shall know the fulness of its meaning in "the house not made with hands!"

"Dust! to the narrow house beneath!
Soul! to thy rest on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more need fear to die!"